# Business Plan

## 2017–2018

Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2017–2018: Business Plans

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# Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Business Plan for 2017-18.

As the department continues to advance improvements to the early years and public education systems in Nova Scotia, the priority for 2017-18 will be to ensure the appropriate resources and supports are in place for our youngest learners in their early years through to our soon-to-be graduates. Public school teachers and early childhood educators will be given the support they need to help our learners succeed. This includes providing ongoing professional learning and engaging our education partners in meaningful consultation, so that changes introduced in our systems occur in a thoughtful and deliberate way.

This is an historic time for early learning and development as the department launches an Early Learning Development Framework. For the first time in Nova Scotia, children in regulated child care and Early Years Centres will have common, consistent, high quality programming that will support best practice from around the world in play-based learning.

As we continue to review the public school program, the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions will work to address the challenges our teachers face in the classroom. With nine seats on the Council, classroom teachers will work with government staff and union officials to direct how the province will invest $20 million into classrooms during the next two school years.

As well, the Commission on Inclusive Education will review best practices across Canada and engage front-line teachers, parents, and students to make recommendations for more effective implementation of inclusive education in our schools.

We will continue the class-size cap initiative in 2017-18, which caps the number of students per classroom at 20 for grades Primary to 2, and 25 for grades 3 to 6. We will also be moving forward with initiatives that provide students with experiential learning opportunities to give them the skills they need to continue to be successful after graduation.

The department recognizes that our educators do an exceptional job to support the children and families in our province. With guidance from both the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions and the Commission on Inclusive Education, the department will work to ensure the policies we introduce into the education system, such as a provincial student attendance policy, set clear expectations and support the success of all of our learners.

Original signed by

**Honourable Karen Casey**
**Minister, Education and Early Childhood Development**

# Vision, Mission, and Mandate

## Vision

All children and students are confident and proud, maximizing their potential and contributing to a thriving society.

## Mission

The Department will lead the transformation of the early years and public education system. We will do this by designing an innovative curriculum, facilitating excellence in teaching and learning, ensuring equity throughout the system, and fostering collaborative partnerships. This will provide children, students, and families with a strong foundation for success.

## Mandate

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has a broad mandate that includes responsibility for early childhood development and the education of children and youth through the public school system. The department's mandate is carried out through:

- child, youth, and family-centered programs and services
- early learning and care programs for children from birth to school entry
- high-quality educational programs and student services in both of Canada's official languages
- strong assessment and evaluation services
- a focus on creating a more culturally-responsive and inclusive education system
- a progressive and responsive policy environment
- effective financial management, facilities planning, and comptrollership
- teacher education and certification
- effective opportunities for ongoing, high-quality professional learning for teachers and principals
- educational research and partnerships

Through implementation of the Department's mandate, the following specific actions will be undertaken:

- implement the Education Action Plan to modernize and improve the P-12 education system
- maintain focus on investing in and improving the learning and teaching environment that benefits both teachers and students
- lead the creation of collective impact initiatives that bring together businesses, civil society organizations, and engaged citizens to improve communities
- enhance guidance and student career counseling services
- place additional focus on math and science skills in grades primary to 12
- introduce coding as a foundational component of grade primary to 12 curriculums
- assess and plan for expiring P3 contracts through a comprehensive capital planning process
- continue to focus on early learning and care

# Improving Early Childhood and P-12 Education

Government continues to invest in the Nova Scotia public education system so that students, families, and educators get the resources and support they need to succeed. In 2017-18, the information gained from the Council to Improve Classroom Conditions and the Commission on Inclusive Education will be used to guide the work of the department.

### Council to Improve Classroom Conditions

The Council to Improve Classroom Conditions has been established to identify the concerns of teachers and to study and make recommendations to the department and school boards for implementation on systemic demands on teachers' time that may limit teachers' ability to facilitate student learning and success.

The Council has an important role to play in the work of the department, with a mandate to direct how the province will invest $20 million into classrooms during the next two school years. The following priority issues have been identified for the Council, with preliminary recommendations expected no later than April 28, 2017:

- data collection and reporting
- assessment and evaluation
- timing of administrative days relative to report card preparation
- student attendance policy
- technology and work processes, including PowerSchool and TIENET
- scope of practice for teachers
- planning for student success
- complex classrooms
- class sizes at all grade levels
- student discipline policy

### Commission on Inclusive Education

A three-person Commission on Inclusive Education has been established to examine the current status of inclusive education in public schools in Nova Scotia. The Commission will conduct a research-based overview of the current practice and policy, and provide recommendations on how the implementation of inclusive education can be improved, with a focus on funding, resources, and professional development.

The Commission will also develop a comprehensive strategic plan that includes measurable education goals for implementing inclusive education, with specific recommendations for improving teaching and learning conditions in support of the goals.

The Commission will provide an interim report with initial recommendations by June 30, 2017.

## Early Childhood Education

In 2016, the department released a report titled, *Affordable, Quality Child Care: A Great Place to Grow!*, which outlines changes that will take place over five years to address the concerns identified in the review of regulated child care in Nova Scotia. The department, in partnership with the Federal government, will continue to implement actions from this report, including:

- establishing new criteria for funding approvals that will include requirements related to quality and sustainability
- developing a provincial early learning curriculum
- developing a quality improvement model for regulated child care, including standards for program quality and evaluation

In 2017-18, the department will introduce play-based pre-primary programming in a number of schools across Nova Scotia. This program will be available to 4 year olds the year before they enter school and will provide them with access to high-quality early learning programs based on Nova Scotia's first ever Early Learning Curriculum Framework.

The department will continue to work with partners to develop supports and services for children and their families in communities across the province, including piloting implementation of preschool screenings at 36 months of age and 6 months before school entry.

## P-12 Education

*Public school program and renewed curriculum*

The department is committed to increased student achievement. Working with classroom teachers, the department has renewed the curriculum for grades primary to 6, and released the first primary to grade 12 literacy strategy that increases the focus on teaching reading and writing, and developing oral communication skills.

The department will continue the review of the public school program in 2017-18, with priorities related to student supports and transitions to include:

- beginning the curriculum renewal process for grades 7 and 8, and Health curriculum in grades 4 through 8.
- continuing implementation of the literacy strategy, supported by professional learning opportunities for teachers
- continuing development and implementation of the new coding strategy and the renewed math strategy, supported by professional learning opportunities for teachers
- continuing the gradual implementation of a new communicative approach for grades 7 and 8 in Core French
- establishing an implementation plan for the career education framework (grades 4 to 12)
- expanding the Homework Hub introduced in 2016 to grade 10 math students
- updating of Entrepreneurship 12
- implementing phase one of a new Citizenship 9 course at grade 9

- continuing to develop and provide resources that reflect the language, history, and culture of Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, and Mi'kmaq into the grade primary to 12 curriculum
- evaluating recommended social and emotional learning (SEL) programs and their efficacy in a Nova Scotia context.

*Student Supports and Transitions*

Education and Early Childhood Development works closely with other departments, agencies, and organizations to provide supports to students, to ensure they have timely access to a wide range of services, including mental health and physical well-being.

The department is also working to further promote cultural awareness and equity for all students by building knowledge of treaty education and infusing new and existing curricula with outcomes, resources and strategies that address and reflect our diverse student population.

Priorities related to student supports and transitions include:

- continuing to work with the Interuniversity Research Network, including the administration of research grants to local organizations
- working with our partners to expand school breakfast programs across the province
- increasing funding for speech language pathologists and school psychologists
- expanding SchoolsPlus services to more schools across the province
- increasing the number of post-secondary transition year programs with the goal of one per school board for graduating high school students with special needs
- reviewing and responding to the recommendations provided in the Transition Task Force report, and reconvening the Task Force in the fall of 2017 to report on progress
- reviewing and responding to the recommendations from the Advisory Panel on Innovation in Mental Health and Addictions

*Teaching and Leadership Standards*

High-quality teaching is essential to student success. As professionals, teachers have enormous responsibilities and face increasing demands. They need support, time, and structure that will allow them to focus on student learning and achievement.

Priorities related to teaching and leadership standards include:

- continuing discussion with public school educators on the development of teaching standards
- engaging and consulting with education partners on the development of leadership standards for school administrators

# Performance Measures[1]

## Student Assessments

The department is continuing work to improve student assessment and evaluation, including a review of all provincial and board-level assessments conducted in Nova Scotia schools, and streamlining to decrease the administrative burden on teachers and students.

### *Nova Scotia Assessments: Mathematics*

The Nova Scotia Assessment for Mathematics is used to measure student learning and achievement in math for students in grades 4 and 6.

The target for this measure is to maintain or increase the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline year.

| Percentage of Students Meeting Math Expectations | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics** | | |
| | **2015-16*** | **2016-17** |
| Grade 4 | 76% | 77% |
| Grade 6 | 68% | 70% |

* Baseline.

### *Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing*

The Nova Scotia Assessment for Reading and Writing is used to measure student learning and achievement in literacy for students in grades 3 and 6. Students in the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) participate in the English-language Nova Scotia Assessment in Reading and Writing in grade 6. French-language provincial assessments in reading and writing are administered to students in grades 3 and 6 attending school in CSAP.

The targets for these measures is to maintain or increase the percentage of students meeting expectations over the baseline year.

**Assessment: Reading**

| Percentage of Students Meeting Reading Expectations | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading** | | | |
| | **2014-15*** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** |
| Grade 3 | 68% | 67% | 68% |
| Grade 6 | 74% | 73% | 73% |
| **L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : lecture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial)** | | | |
| | **2014-15*** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** |
| Grade 3 | 75% | 70% | 68% |
| Grade 6 | 69% | 72% | 71% |

*Baseline

[1] The reporting years for assessment results reflect the school year.

Assessment: Writing

| Percentage of Students Meeting Writing Expectations | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nova Scotia Assessment: Writing | | | |
| | 2014–15* | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| **Grade 3** | | | |
| Ideas | 76% | 73% | 73% |
| Organization | 60% | 59% | 58% |
| Language Use | 64% | 63% | 63% |
| Conventions | 53% | 51% | 53% |
| **Grade 6** | | | |
| Ideas | 76% | 78% | 72% |
| Organization | 61% | 62% | 57% |
| Language Use | 66% | 67% | 63% |
| Conventions | 58% | 61% | 53% |
| L'Évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse : écriture (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial) | | | |
| Year | 2014–15* | 2015-16 | 2016-17 |
| **Grade 3** | | | |
| Ideas | 65% | 67% | 68% |
| Organization | 59% | 58% | 60% |
| Language Use | 58% | 59% | 55% |
| Conventions | 48% | 51% | 46% |
| **Grade 6** | | | |
| Ideas | 71% | 75% | 73% |
| Organization | 59% | 67% | 59% |
| Language Use | 56% | 61% | 60% |
| Conventions | 43% | 47% | 44% |

*Baseline

*Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results are used to measure 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science and allow for comparison across jurisdictions. The PISA assessment is one of the measures for a desired outcome of increased student learning and achievement in literacy and mathematics. Each assessment includes questions from all three subject areas with a focus on one subject area each time the assessment is administered. The major focus of the 2015 PISA assessment was science.

The target for this measure is an increase over the 2009 baseline data by the next reporting period.

| PISA Results | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Reading | | | Math | | | Science | | |
| | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 | 2009 | 2012 | 2015 |
| NS Average | 516 | 508 | 517 | 512 | 497 | 497 | 523 | 516 | 517 |
| Canadian Average | 524 | 523 | 527 | 527 | 518 | 516 | 529 | 525 | 528 |
| OECD Average | 493 | 496 | 493 | 496 | 494 | 490 | 501 | 501 | 493 |

*Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP)*

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) results are used to measure student performance in reading, mathematics, and science in grade 8.

The target for this measure is an increase over the 2007 baseline data in the next reporting period.

| PCAP Results | 2007 Results | | 2010 Results* | | 2013 Results | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subject | NS Average | Canadian Average | NS Average | Canadian Average | NS Average | Canadian Average |
| Reading | 483 | 500 | 489 | 500 | 488 | 508 |
| Math | N/A | N/A | 474 | 500 | 488 | 507 |
| Science | N/A | N/A | 489 | 500 | 492 | 500 |

*adjusted baseline

Note: Administration of PCAP 2016 is anticipated for spring 2016, with results available in fall 2017.

*High School Graduation Rate*

The high school graduation rate is the percentage of students receiving a high school graduation diploma compared with the number of students in grade 9 three years earlier.

The target for this measure is to continue to maintain or increase the graduation rate over the baseline in the next reporting period.

| High School Graduation Rate | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2009–10* | 2010–11 | 2011–12 | 2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15 | 2015–16 |
| 86.1% | 88.7% | 88.6% | 89.6% | 89.8% | 92.5% | 90.7 |

*baseline

*Early Childhood Development Intervention Wait List*

Early Childhood Development Intervention Services delivers services for young children diagnosed with, or at risk for, developmental delay. The services are designed to help both the child and the family from the time the child is born to when they enter school. Leading up to 2015–16, more than 300 families were waiting for services. These families now have access and are benefitting from the services.

The target for this measure is to maintain the waitlist at zero, with new families seeking services being seen within one month of being referred.

| Number of Children on Waitlist (Early Childhood Development Intervention) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2013–14* | 2014–15 | 2015–16 |
| # of children | 336 | 332 | No waitlist |

*baseline

*The Early Development Instrument*

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a teacher-completed questionnaire, collected every two years across the province that measures a child's development in five core areas that are reliable predictors of adult health, education, and social outcomes. Schools, school boards, and community partners can use this data to identify vulnerable populations of children, and mobilize resources to support young children and their families where it is most needed.

The target is to reduce the percentage of children vulnerable in each of the EDI domains by the next reporting period.

| Percentage of Children Vulnerable in EDI Domains | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2012–13* | 2014–15 |
| Physical Health and Well-Being | 10.3% | 9.8% |
| Social Competence | 9.9% | 9.1% |
| Emotional maturity | 9.7% | 9.0% |
| Language and Cognitive Development | 10.4% | 10.8% |
| Communication Skills and General Knowledge | 10.7% | 10.6% |
| **At least one domain** | **25.5%** | **25.5%** |

Note: Data is collected every two years.

*baseline (Note: The 2012–13 baseline percentages were originally calculated using the national cut-point[2], which is largely populated by children living in Ontario and British Columbia. A cut-point specific to Nova Scotia results has been used to re-calculate the EDI results to more accurately report on, and track, the province's EDI results).

[2] Cut-points are the value that marks the boundary for the lowest 10th percentile in the distribution. For 2012–13, cut-points specific to the Nova Scotia distribution were used to create a Nova Scotia baseline. Ongoing reporting of EDI results will use this method.

# Departmental Financial Summary

**Departmental Expenses Summary**
**($ thousands)**

| Programs and Services | 2016–2017 Estimate | 2016–2017 Forecast | 2017–2018 Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Management | 2,679 | 2,628 | 2,837 |
| Strategic Policy and Research | 2,684 | 2,376 | 2,642 |
| Early Years | 65,796 | 64,356 | 73,577 |
| Centre for Learning Excellence | 4,547 | 4,033 | 4,520 |
| Education Innovation Programs and Services | 14,837 | 14,596 | 15,663 |
| Student Equity and Support Services | 11,306 | 11,203 | 11,698 |
| French Programs and Services | 10,318 | 10,965 | 10,099 |
| Corporate Services | 4,894 | 4,835 | 4,475 |
| Public Education Funding | 1,001,693 | 998,535 | 1,019,863 |
| Credit Allocation | 7,313 | 7,313 | 7,313 |
| Teachers' Pension | 81,751 | 81,751 | 90,589 |
| School Capital - Amortization | 71,714 | 71,714 | 73,439 |
| **Total Departmental Expenses** | 1,279,532 | 1,274,305 | 1,316,715 |
| **Ordinary Recoveries** | 13,922 | 13,938 | 13,142 |
| Funded Staff (# of FTEs) | | | |
| **Department Funded Staff** | 200.8 | 182.0 | 197.8 |

Note:
For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1